Your suggestion with regard to text books will be sent to the Director for remarks. The Expenditure Committee have also made certain suggestions in their report which will come up for consideration.

With reference to your remark that in selecting non-officials for the Conference, people who have no axes of their own to grind should be selected, I may say that Government do want people of that sort. I shall be very much obliged if the Assembly would suggest certain names for the consideration of Government.

105. Certain educational reforms with special reference to technical and industrial education.

Mr. C. P. Kesava Pillai (Member, Quilon Taluk) referred to the general condition of health of the pupils in all schools and said that it was very poor. It was in most cases due to the starvation of the pupils during noon-time. To remedy that evil, the Member suggested that Government should arrange for the provision of noon-day meal to such of the pupils as did not or could not provide themselves with the meal. Endowments by charitable persons, funds set apart for State charities, or scholarship funds might be utilised for the purpose. The attaching of hostels to higher grade English schools would remedy the evil to some extent. The prompt attention of all headmasters should be drawn to the matter and they should see that no pupil starved during noon-day and should insist on noon-day meal being brought by the pupils themselves as far as possible.

The Member then proceeded to consider the general condition of vernacular school buildings put up by the people and handed over to Government. Their condition was utterly unsatisfactory and the situation demanded immediate attention. He referred to the higher grade vernacular school at Mulankadavu in West Quilon. The building put up by Government had fallen down, and it was not re-built. Classes V, VI and VII were being held in a private building free of rent. The department called upon the local inhabitants to re-construct the building and stated that the higher classes would be abolished in the event of failure of the people to do so. The proposal of the department was quite unfair, as the original school building was constructed by the people themselves at great cost and as the additional building which collapsed was put up by Government. Still, the Member stated that the people of the locality would reconstruct the building, if the Government would contribute a moiety of the cost. The next item of improvement which the Member suggested was that classes containing seventy and eighty pupils should not be put in charge of a single teacher, as was often done in certain schools, when teachers were transferred or were absent on leave. Temporary arrangements should be promptly made in such cases.

Speaking about technical education, the Member said that the Carpentry school at Quilon which was the only one of its kind, was not working satisfactorily at all. He suggested that the first four classes in the school be abolished and that pupils who had undergone a course of instruction in an elementary school be admitted into it and given technical education in smithery, carpentry, &c. Those who passed out of the school should be able to build houses at cheap rates, and should prove to be capable maistries in the Public Works Department and excellent cabinet makers. There were well-equipped workshops in Quilon and the school should be conducted in close communion with those workshops, under the guidance and advice of a Board of seven or nine members with the Director of Industries as the President. The Carpentry school should rather be mended than ended as proposed by the Dewan in his opening Address.

Dealing with the Department of Industries, the Member pointed out that the department served no useful public purpose. He also instanced the case of the jaggery factory to show the futility of the activities of the department and the enormous avoidable expenditure incurred by the department in maintaining a staff which had no work to do for the past one year and more. The work of the Oil Assistant was also quite disproportionate to the outlay of public money on that branch of the department. In conclusion, he suggested that steps should be taken

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to improve the coir industry by finding out better methods of extracting the fibre from the husk, that education and training in the matter of candle-making should be imparted to the people with a view to the abundant natural facilities available for the purpose being adequately utilised, and that cottage industries should be encouraged by the grant of loans like the loans for agricultural improvements, and by the opening of small aided schools in each taluk for the purpose of advancing the industry suitable for that taluk.

Mr. Narayanan Krishnan (Member, Parur Taluk) stated that the existing system of vernacular education in the State, while it tended to make Travancore one of the most forward States in point of literacy was at the same time instrumental in bringing into existence a large number of discontented young men who with their examination certificates found it hard to stand the strain of modern conditions. The annual output of Vernacular School Leaving Certificate holders and Vernacular Higher Certificate holders was out of all proportion to the demand for teachers in vernacular schools. The problem of unemployment was becoming acute every day. A change in the present system of education was, therefore, of paramount necessity, and industrial education alone was the panacea for the prevailing ills. New industries had to be started and old industries revived and encouraged, as therein lay the foundation for the future prosperity of the country. The Member, therefore, advocated the establishment of an industrial school in each taluk and the diversion for the purpose of at least a third of the expenditure incurred by the Government on account of vernacular education.

Dewan's reply.—I thank you for your suggestions and remarks. As I said in the opening Address, the industrial policy of the State is undergoing examination and is under the consideration of Government. I do not think I can say anything further about the question now.

The problem of mid-day meals for boys is an acute one in Travancore. Children walk long distances to attend schools. Whenever I ask the teachers whether they have had their noon-meal, I receive invariably the reply 'yes', but when the children are asked, at least 50 per cent. of them say 'no'. This is a very sorry state of affairs. But your suggestion that Government should create some system whereby these children should be fed, I am afraid, is not practicable. This would involve, on an average, an outly of 3½ Chs. per student per day. Even if Government be prepared to spend the money, there is absolutely no guarantee that the money will go into the stomachs of the children. The money will probably go into the pockets of the teachers. Human nature is human nature. I am already in correspondence with the Director on this question, and it seems to me that the only way in which this question can be successfully tackled is the creation of the Village Councils. When these come into existence, it will be one of their educational duties to see that school children are given mid-day meal. Repeated instructions have been issued to the headmasters in this matter, but their conscience is not sufficiently awake yet. As I said, the Village Council will be the body that will be in a position to solve the question. It can employ men to prepare *kanji* and supervise the feeding effectively. Why, as in other lands, the boys here do not carry their mid-day meal with them, I cannot comprehend. Some say that there are no tiffin rooms, but where there are such rooms, they are not used for their legitimate purpose but are used as lumber rooms and are not even swept. These are all matters for local bodies to look into. You cannot expect Government to be present everywhere. When local gentlemen begin to look into these questions, there will be some guarantee that these things will be done well.

In regard to the Carpentry school at Quilon, you say that there are workshops locally which can be used for practising. In the light of what you say, the question will be re-examined.

Your request to take up the repairs of the school building at Mulankadavu will be looked into.

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